

Message Text

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51

ACTION INR-05

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FM AMEMBASSY OUAGADOUGOU

TO DIA WASHDC

INFO USDAO ABIDJAN

USDAO/DAKAR

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USCINCEUR

SECSTATE WASHDC 8857

AMEMBASSY BAMAKO

C O N F I D E N T I A L OUAGADOUGOU 2574

FROM EARMA ABIDJAN

E.O. 11652: GDS

THIS IS MESSAGE IR 6 851 0115 74

1. UPPER VOLTA/MALI
2. BORDER DISPUTE
3. N/A
4. 10 DEC 74
5. OUAGADOUGOU 10 DEC 74
6. B-2
7. 6 851 0040
8. 6 851 0115 74
9. 10 DEC 74
10. 4
11. DIRM 1A 3E
12. USDAO ABIDJAN
13. RAYBURN L. SMITH, COL GS DATT

15. SUMMARY (C): REPORT PROVIDES SUMMARY OF MALI-
UPPER VOLTA BORDER DISPUTE AS RELATED BY FRENCH
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MILITARY SOURCE RESIDENT IN OUAGA WHOSE REPORTING IN

THE PAST HAS PROVED ACCURATE.

1. (C) AREA IN DISPUTE IS NORTH OF DIONOUGA - MANABOULE - GOUTOUR KIRI RIVER - NE CORNER OF UPPER VOLTA/NIGER/MALI BORDER. PRESENT BORDER SHOWN ON FRENCH AND UPPER VOLTAN MAPS WAS FIXED BY DECREE OF 1919; UPPER VOLTA MADE PART OF IVORY COAST BY DECREE OF 1932; FRENCH SUB-GOVERNOR IN SUDAN (PRESENT VALI) PROPOSED MODIFICATION TO DIONOUGA-MANABOULE KIRI RIVER IN 1935, BUT FAILED TO OBTAIN CONCURRENCE OF ABIDJAN, DAKAR OR PARIS; AND IN 1947 PARIS ANNULLED 1932 DECREE AND FIXED BORDERS AS STATED IN 1919 DECREE WHICH BECAME NATIONAL BOUNDARIES AT INDEPENDENCE IN 1960.

2. (C) POPULATION IN DISPUTED AREA ARE NOMADS AND FREQUENTLY MOVE FROM ONE COUNTRY TO ANOTHER. BULK OF POPULATION ARE IN FACT TODAY MALIANS IN ORIGIN. AREA HAS YEAR ROUND WATER. MALIANS FREQUENT OCCUPATION OF AREA SINCE 1960 HAS CAUSED OCCASIONAL DISCUSSION AND NEGOTIATION BETWEEN CHIEFS OF STATE. IN MID NOVEMBER 1974 MALI GENDARMERIE PATROL OF PLATOON SIZE WAS SEIZED BY VOLTAN POLICE. TWO CHIEFS OF STATE MEETING FACE TO FACE RESULTED IN WITHDRAWAL OF ALL MALIAN MILITARY, RELEASE OF PRISONERS, AND AGREEMENT TO ACCEPT 1919 BORDER.

3. (C) VOLTAN TROOPS OF UP TO TWO COMPANIES AND MALIAN TROOPS OF UP TO BATTALION REINFORCED (INCLUDING TANKS, 85 MM CANNON, TRUCK MOUNTED ROCKETS, AND AIR-CRAFT) WERE DEPLOYED IN FRONTIER AREAS BUT NO BORDER CORSSINGS OR EXCHANGE OF FIRE OCCURRED. VOLTANS HAVE NOW WITHDRAWN AND MALIANS ARE BELIEVED TO BE WELL BACK FROM BORDER. FRENCH VOLUNTEERS (PEACE CORPS TYPES) CONFIRM THAT NO MALIAN MILITARY, OTHER THAN PLATOON SIZED PATROL MENTIONED ABOVE, HAVE ENTERED OR OCCUPIED VOLTAN TERRITORY.

4. (C) NO FURTHER MAJOR INCIDENTS ARE ANTICIPATED. VOLTANS CONSIDER ISSUE CLOSED. NEITHER SIDE HAS CAPABILITY TO FIGHT SHOOTING WAR OF EVEN 24 HOURS.
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VOLTAN PRIDE AND HONOR HAS BEEN WOUNDED BUT THEY AWARE OF THEIR MILITARY LIMITATIONS.

5. (C) COMMENT: BELIEVE ABOVE ACCOUNT RELATIVELY ACCURATE. KNOW VOLTAN ARMED FORCES NOT CAPABLE OF DEFENDING AGAINST EVEN MINOR ATTACK. MAINTENANCE OF VOLTAN EQUIPMENT; VOLTAN TRAINING; VOLTAN LEADERSHIP AND VOLTAN LOGISTICS ARE DEFINITELY

NOT CAPABLE OF PROTECTING DISPUTED AREA AGAINST EVEN
TOKEN ENEMY FORCE. SOURCE STATES THAT NORTHEAST CORNER
IS ONLY AREA WHERE PRESENT BOUNDARY IS SUBJECT TO
QUESTION -- PRESENT HILL COULD BE ANOTHER HILL 3000
METERS INSIDE UPPER VOLTA. PRESENT OLD ARMY BUDDIES
CHIEFS OF STARE ARE LIKELY TO KEEP THEIR COOL, BUT
SERIOUS INCIDENT IS POSSIBLE BETWEEN YOUNG CHARGER
LIEUTENANTS. RO PREDICTS CALM. COMMANDER 2D COMPANY,
1ST BATTALION AT GOROM-GOROM DISTRIBUTING DROUGHT
RELIEF TOLD AARMA 10 DEC HIS AREA HAD REMAINED CALM
AND HIS COMPANY NOT ALERTED AT ANY TIME (THIS CONFLICTS
WITH FRENCH AMBASSADOR'S REMARK REPORTED PARA 1
OUAGA'S 2475).
GRAHAM

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